

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, April 12, 1877, with transcript

Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel (Hubbard) Bell. I enclose Mr. Ponton's letter. Please forward it to your father. Boston April 12th, 1877. My darling Pet:

I can't possibly stay away from you any longer so I shall make Mr. Vanderlip an excuse and run down to New York on Friday night. Shall you be in New York on Saturday or shall I go out to Paterson. I shall leave New York for Boston on Sunday reaching here in time for my lecture at the University on Monday morning.

Why did you not do as E. Gray wanted you? I am anxious to know all about his explanations. You say he wanted you to report everything he said to you — as he desired to be open and true to me. I expected upon turning over the page to find his whole explanations written out but I suppose that the remembrance of the details had faded away before you could catch them. It is one of the most extraordinary things about dreams — that it is almost impossible to recall what passed five minutes after waking.

I have seen the Jewett murder alluded to in the papers but I have not read the particulars. I generally avoid such items as much as possible.

I should like to have a look at little Ellis. He is just about the age when children begin to get interesting. Can you understand anything he says? My Lowell lecture is on the 25th of this month. We are to use the Western Union wires on that occasion.

Mr. Gower — the Manager of the Providence lecture was here this evening. I like him exceedingly — both as a friend and as a 2 business man. The Providence people want another lecture. In Boston I have two separate offers to lecture in Music Hall. One from the

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Committee of the Old South — which I am considering. I have given them the refusal of the lecture till the end of this week. Same terms as in New York.

Mr. Gower is willing to enter into arrangements with me for a lecture tour this summer — or if I have to go to Canada! — he would like to arrange with me for the privilege of lecturing. Mr. Ponton's letter received today is so unsatisfactory to me that I intend to write to him tonight — telling him that he must settle at once what he wants to do — because if his arrangement falls through I shall spend the summer in lecturing.

Mr. Gower's idea is this. That he and I do the lecturing at the two ends. For instance — suppose I commence in Boston. I give a scientific lecture in Boston and Mr. Gower appears before a Worcester audience. I explain the principles of Telephony and show how music, etc., can be transmitted by actually doing so before the audience — while Mr. Gower addresses the audience at the other end — as a non-scientific man — not professing to know how the effects that are produced before his audience are brought about. He would say that next evening Mr. Bell would come to Worcester and explain how the effects were produced. I tell my audiences that the same process of manipulation they were witnesses to would be gone through in Worcester next day and that they could witness the effects in Boston on that evening. That is we could convert each place 3 alternately into a transmitting and receiving station, and have the same audience come twice to each end.

Mr. Gower's plan for a tour is this. Say Monday — Bell in Boston — Gower in Worcester -

Tuesday Bell in Worcester, Gower in Springfield.

Wednesday Bell in Springfield, Gower in Albany.

Etc., etc., etc.

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Will your mother be horrified, I can't help it. I must and shall make money this summer — or at least try my best to do so. So if Mr. Ponton does not settle the Titusville matter at once I shall conclude negotiations with Mr. Gower for the summer. I shall write to have the benefit of your father's advice in regard to the business arrangement with Mr. Gower. Mr. Williams' Telephone Line is a great success. The best proof that the Telephone is ready for practical use is this — that people come in to Mr. Williams and after trying his instrument want to buy Telephones for their own use. This shows that they are not disappointed with the results.

I have put Telephones also on my own private line. One in Stearns & George's office in Pearl St. — and one here and it is perfectly delightful. We have no difficulty in using them. Mr. Osgood will have his line ready for Telephone on Saturday and we expect to put instruments on Stone & Downer's Line during next week.

My protege has been wondering about Boston and neighbourhood in search of work unsuccessfully. I gave him a letter that he might show as his recommendation. Mr. Sturgis has this afternoon succeeded in finding a place for him upon a farm and he goes off to work tomorrow.

I am glad that my future is not quite so uncertain as that poor boy's. Bright days I trust are in store for us. Events I suppose will unravel themselves as time goes by. I feel quite stupid tonight and have not the vim to write a nice letter.

I am so glad that your mother was not ashamed of me. I have been half afraid to ask what she thought of the lecture. Please give her my best love — and tell her how much I feel her kindness and interest in coming. Tell her I want to be her son as much as it is possible for me to be so — and that I love her only a little less than you.

Please excuse this letter as I am tired out and headachy.

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With ever so much love. Your own, Alec. Miss Mabel G. Hubbard Paterson, N. J.